National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NASAfacts

Groundwater Cleanup and Your Community

NASA's Plan Involves You

We recognize that being a good neighbor includes sharing information that will help you to better understand NASA's groundwater cleanup project at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). We want you to know how you can participate in decisions shaping this cleanup effort. Your views are important to us, especially as we plan for a cleanup activity that is proposed to take place in your community.

A New Pasadena Groundwater Treatment Plant

Under a recent agreement with the City of Pasadena, NASA would pay for a new water treatment plant to be built by the City on vacant property in the Windsor Reservoir area (see map). Groundwater extracted from four drinking water wells owned by the City would be treated to remove volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and perchlorate – chemicals that originated from waste disposal practices at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory many decades ago. In addition to paying for the design, construction and operation of the plant, NASA would provide technical support to the City of Pasadena, who would be responsible for operating the treatment plant.

The new plant would treat up to 7,000 gallons of water per minute. It would allow NASA to clean up groundwater in the Monk Hill Subarea, which is a portion of the larger Raymond Basin aquifer, far sooner than if we tried to remove all the chemicals by building another treatment plant on site at JPL. The new plant would use technology similar to the treatment facility NASA funded for the Lincoln Avenue Water Company in Altadena, which has been successfully operating since July 2004.

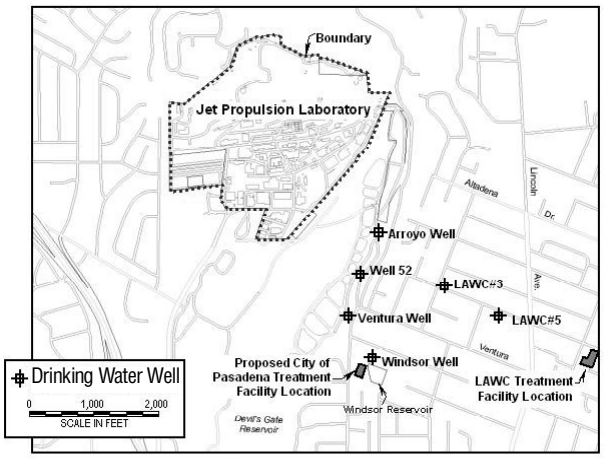
How It Works

Removing VOCs

In the liquid-phase granular activated carbon process, very porous carbon particles attract and accumulate unwanted volatile organic compounds that are in the water. The carbon beads are later disposed of at a licensed off-site facility.

Removing Perchlorate

Ion exchange technology runs groundwater through tanks filled with tiny resin, or plastic, beads. When the unwanted perchlorate in the groundwater touches the beads, perchlorate is exchanged with chloride in the resin, and the perchlorate is extracted from the water.



A new treatment plant for groundwater extracted from four closed drinking water wells – Windsor Well, Well 52, Arroyo Well, and Ventura Well – would be located southeast of JPL on vacant City property next to the Windsor Reservoir.

Next Steps

When will construction start? What will traffic be like during construction? What will the facility look like? These are some of the many details still to be worked out. For example, NASA would assist the City in its application for a local building permit. ►

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The permitting approval process provides opportunities during the public comment period for sharing your views on the treatment plant under consideration in your community such as:

- A City of Pasadena Conditional Use Permit authorizing that the proposed land use and activities are compatible and consistent with those of the particular zoning district.
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance requiring the City to identify significant environmental effects and avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible.
- California Department of Health Services permit allowing the system to supply drinking water after treatment.

Your Comments Matter

NASA has published a document referred to as a Proposed Plan that describes NASA's preferred alternative for cleaning up chemicals in groundwater to the east and southeast of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. That plan includes funding of the proposed new groundwater treatment plant for the City of Pasadena and continued funding of the Lincoln Avenue Water Company facility that has been operating (with NASA funding) since July of 2004. The Proposed Plan explains how this proposed treatment would work, what other options were considered, and the reasons why NASA thinks this is the best method for cleaning up groundwater in the Monk Hill Subarea.

You can read the Proposed Plan at the local information repositories listed below, and on our website at http://jplwater.nasa.gov. The public comment period from April 19 to May 19 is when you can give your views on the document in writing. There will be a Community Information Session and a public meeting you can attend for more discussion and yet another opportunity to provide your comments on the Proposed Plan. Once NASA has been able to get everyone's input, we'll make the final decision on the best way to proceed. Then, a document referred to as a Record of Decision will include a summary of the comments received and how those comments changed the decision that was reached.

We'll continue sharing information about groundwater cleanup in your community as we learn more along the way. If you have questions, please email, write or call (addresses and numbers are listed below).

ATTENTION!
Please note that the public comment period has been extended to Friday, July 7.

For more information contact

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Information Repositories

La Cañada Flintridge Public Library
4545 Oakwood Ave., La Cañada Flintridge, California 91011
(818) 790-3330

Pasadena Central Library
285 E. Walnut St., Pasadena, California 91101
(626) 744-4052

Altadena Public Library
600 E. Mariposa Ave., Altadena, California 91001
(626) 798-0833

JPL Library, Bldg. 111
(JPL Personnel Only)
(818) 354-4200